

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

TO: Art Schmidt
Sport Fish
Sitka
Dept. of Fish and Game

DATE: June 9, 1975

FILE NO:

TELEPHONE NO:

FROM: Donald L. Siedelman *ALS*
Sport Fish
Ketchikan
Dept. of Fish and Game

SUBJECT: Humpback Creek Foot Survey
April 22, 1975

Conducted a foot survey with aid of Pink Salmon Research, Grizzly Bear and Chopper. Traveled to the area with the Grizzly Bear and then to the creek with pink salmon research, Gerry Downey, who was conducting a pink salmon fry out migration estimate with fry traps.

The U.S.F.S. Trail was not in the best of shape, but in spots passable for the areas it was needed. The creek can be walked along easily after navigating through the outlet area which is fairly steep and rocky along the creek but adequate enough on the trail. The snow was 2' - 4' deep upstream along the bank above the intertidal area.

Stream has an excellent bottom for pink salmon spawning from just inside the outlet area to the first bend and then good to the falls. The lower area is level and wide (450' - 600') and not very deep with small gravel and sand. At the first bend is where the creek bottom changes to no sand in gravel and little larger gravel than down stream. The current is a little stronger in this area than in the intertidal area probably causing the difference in bottom composition. Only pink salmon fry were observed in the creek. No other fish species were observed. Visibility was excellent and the water shallow enough to see clear across the stream if desired. Water temperature in lower stream was 39° F. at 1415 hours.

There are only three holes in the entire creek, clay bank, hole in corner above clay bank, and the falls hole. The clay bank hole is deep with a lot of logs in the bank area. The steelhead were laying in the lower end of this hole, but I did have one follow in the upper area. No other fish were observed in this area or hole above.

The hole at the falls is probably the best steelhead fishing hole. Stream map shows the sizes and numbers of fish taken in this hole. Hopefully, Ed Jones will be able to provide age information from those fish for our files as his time permits. As shown, I fished this creek on three different occasions, 4/22, 4/24, and 4/30. Most of the fish were dark or had been in the stream for quite some time (month or more.)

The largest fish were both females and the largest was 937 mm and weighed in the office scale 20 hours later at 18 lb 5 oz.. The other female was 916 mm and was 75% spent. I did not observe steelhead spawning, but when we left their via chopper

on the 24th there were two large fish observed in the area below the first Island at the bend.

There were four fishermen in the stream on the evening of the 24th and they stayed for two days catching no fish except one small rainbow (?). I did not creel census them since they were walking in as we were flying out. But I did talk with their charter pilot and he stated that drinking could have been first choice over fishing.

It appeared that there were not too many fish in this creek. Estimate maybe 50 altogether in both the clay bank and falls holes. If the creel information is correct, there seemed to be a surplus of males and very few females in this stream. I would assume both were repeat spawners with impressive age structures.

The area below the falls has larger gravel than the lower stream area, but still could supply adequate spawning for all species of salmon frequenting stream. According to the old stream catalog SSR No. 305, the creek has all but king salmon. I attached the stream drawing from the report and their verbage but not the counts. Appears the coho would or was spawning in the island areas by the falls. ;

I would think that due to the length of this stream (one mile) that the steelhead would not be super abundant as my observations indicate. Limited rearing area may be the problem.

Also talked with the charter service and found out that on May 4th four other people went into the area and did not catch a fish.

Bob Baade stated that this was a good stream during late April - early May. Appears that this year it would have been good in late April instead of early May.

Bob Baade Jr. will sign off for now.

CC: R. Armstrong
Ed Jones